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SUBJECT: WHALING: PRESS ON JAPAN'S POSITION AT IWC  
MEETING AND SEAMEN'S UNION DEMARCHE

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SUMMARY  
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1. According to press reporting, on May 24, Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) held a joint meeting of its fisheries divisions and pro-whaling caucus to discuss Japan's goals and strategies for this year's International Whaling Commission (IWC) Annual Meeting in St. Kitts and Nevis. Toward its central goal of "normalizing" the IWC, Japan plans to set up a new framework outside the IWC made up of countries that support the resumption of commercial whaling and will announce the plan in St. Kitts. An All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) senior official, who attended the LDP meeting, told Embassy during its annual "demarche" that the idea behind the framework was to unify pro-whaling country policies, while working in parallel with the IWC.  
END SUMMARY

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"New Framework" To Normalize IWC  
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2. According to the May 25 issue of the Suisan Keizai Shimbun, a fisheries trade newspaper, the Fisheries Agency of Japan (FAJ) recently briefed the LDP on Japan's goals for St. Kitts: to complete the RMS, "normalize" the IWC, and adopt a resolution condemning harassment activities by NGOs against whaling vessels (refs), as well as other agenda items. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) then provided an overview of IWC signatory country likely positions/possible voting and handed out a list, showing the "pro whaling" camp with 34 and the anti-whaling group with 31 votes. The Mainichi Shimbun also reported that the GOJ decided to set up, outside the IWC, a new framework consisting of pro-whaling countries and to unveil the plan at the IWC Meeting. The paper reported that the aim was to have the outcome of the discussions on the Japanese proposal reflected in the IWC and quoted a senior FAJ official as saying "we want to

break the rigid situation in the IWC."

13. Embassy's informal translation of the article in the Suisan Keizai Shimbun follows.

Begin Text:

May 25, 2006 The Suisan Keizai Shimbun P.1

LDP Joint Meeting: Japan's Position for IWC Strategy Considered

A joint meeting of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)'s Fisheries Division, Fisheries General Survey Committee, Research Commission on Fishery Policies, and Parliamentary League in Support of Whaling was held on May 24 at the LDP headquarters and considered strategies for the International Whaling Commission (IWC) Scientific Committee of May 26 and the IWC Annual Meeting from June 16 in St. Kitts and Nevis, as well as other agenda items.

Shinichi Suzuki, Chairman of the Research Commission on Fishery Policies and the Parliamentary League in Support of Whaling, reiterated Japan's position and stressed, "Hard-line whaling countries say that they won't allow even a single whale to be taken (NOTE: This is obviously an error in the article - "whaling countries" must be "anti-whaling countries" END NOTE). Japan's position is to use only stock-abundant whales and conserve endangered species based on scientific facts. Food culture should be respected by each other and must not be imposed on others."

The Fisheries Agency of Japan (FAJ) listed specific goals for the IWC and said it will make efforts to archive them: 1) complete RMS and normalize the IWC (NOTE: a paper handed out to the participating LDP Diet members by the FAJ, which we obtained from Kyodo News and JSU, says "as we need to break through the IWC deadlock, we will cooperate with countries concerned and announce that we will hold a meeting outside the IWC to normalize the IWC." END NOTE); 2) given that vessels of JARPA II, which returned to Japan in April, had faced vicious harassment from anti-whaling groups, such as bumping the ship's hull, win a resolution to require a voluntary ban of such dangerous actions; 3) explain scientifically that it is possible to conduct sustainable whaling of Antarctic minke whales, whose stock will be re-estimated (NOTE: the handout says "as it is likely that the new stock amount estimate of Antarctic mink whales will be recalculated, we will explain scientifically that its sustainable whaling is possible even based on the new estimate. END NOTE); 4) set a catch limit for coastal whaling in Japan, abolish whale sanctuaries and block the setting of additional sanctuaries, etc.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) explained the landscape of IWC signatory countries and announced that it will continue its effort to secure a majority of pro-sustainable whaling countries. Minoru Morimoto, IWC Commissioner for Japan, said, "We all will work together to advocate sustainable whaling again this year."

Upper House member Yoshimasa Hayashi debriefed on the results of his discussions with U.S. IWC Commissioner Hogarth and other representatives from May 2-3 in the U.S. He appreciated the U.S. down-to-earth attitude towards research whaling and suggested the necessity to come up with a U.S.-Japan joint proposal and take in moderate countries to normalize the IWC. In regard to the aboriginal quota to be discussed at next year's IWC Meeting in Alaska, he told the U.S. representatives that he hopes it is not going to be like the Shimonoseki IWC Meeting in 2002. The U.S. agreed that IWC normalization is an important issue and would continue to hold a dialogue with Japan, although the U.S. has some different opinions from Japan's.

Kazutaka Sangen, Mayor of Daiji Town in Wakayama Prefecture and Chairman of the National Liaison-Council of Local Governments Protecting Whaling, petitioned for early resumption of commercial whaling and an agreement on a minke whale catch limit for coastal whaling areas as well as other requests. Keiichi Nakajima, President of the Japan Whaling Association, also made requests such as continuing to conduct research whaling, resuming coastal whaling, and preventing obstructions to research whaling.

Diet members opined one after another that Japan should more strongly emphasize its affirmation about sustainable use of cetaceans, protest against obstructionist activities against research whaling, and focus on attaining a majority of countries supporting Japan at the IWC. There were also other opinions, such as Japan should scientifically investigate and address the problem of the recently exploding collisions of whales and super high-speed boats and prove that whales have been increasing.

End Text

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Seamen's Union "Demarche"  
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14. As part of its annual pre-IWC meeting "demarche" to 25 Tokyo-based embassies, the All Japan Seamen's Union's (JSU) Suezono Kondo, Secretary for the Bureau of Fisheries and Toshikazu Suzuki, Assistant to the Vice Director, visited EST Deputy and EST FSN on May 25 to preview the 69,000-member (29,000 Japanese and 40,000 foreign members) organization's position for this year's IWC meeting. Kondo stressed that Japan's most important issue will be to "normalize" the IWC. The JSU's position paper states that "what the IWC is now called for the most is that the IWC regains its adequate function and all member states should discuss each other in good faith on how we sustainably utilise the marine resources of our collective possession now and in the future."

15. With regard to the "new framework", Kondo, who attended the LDP briefings, said that informal gatherings of pro-whaling countries have regularly been held in the form of dinners and parties but there has never been a situation where all pro-whaling countries got together at one sitting. Asked about the results of JARPA II, he stressed that Fin and Humpback whales were "visibly increasing". Kondo also said that many whalers were now fresh out of fisheries high schools -- seventy percent of the crew is in now their 20s -- and that whaling was needed to maintain the livelihoods of many people.

16. Text of the JSU's Position Statement for the St. Kitts IWC Annual Meeting (English version as delivered):

OPENING STATEMENT  
TO THE 58TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE IWC

All Japan Seamen's Union

The All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU), established in 1945, is the sole nation-wide industrial trade union of maritime workers in Japan. All our activities are based on freedom and democracy as the keynote and our objectives are to improve the living conditions and status of our members and to promote sound development of shipping, fishery, port and other related industries through the solidarity of all the union members. The JSU has been affiliated with the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) since 1950 and is actively taking part in the International union movement to establish a fair and decent framework of working condition at sea in cooperation with maritime workers in shipping, fisheries and port industries worldwide.

On the opening of the 58th Annual Meeting of the IWC, the

JSU would expressly like to define its standpoint in the following. The JSU also urge the Chairperson of the plenary and distinguished delegates from each government to understand duly whaling issue in the context of International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) and the outcome of scientific research, and to discuss whaling issue neither in political or economic calculation, nor in emotional incentives.

In the severe food shortages in Japan after World War II, the JSU saw many members off sailing out to the Antarctic Ocean to catch whales, hoping to contribute to the supply of protein foods to the people and rehabilitation of the country's economy. There were also many members engaging in whaling related industries on coastal areas. All those have gone as a result of the commercial whaling moratorium adopted at the IWC in 1982 by the majority in which the anti-whaling countries ignored the review of the IWC Scientific Committee and exercised the majority rule as a brutal tool. We will never forget the fact that considerable members who had engaged on whaling as an essence of subsistence were sobbingly compelled to quit since 1987, as the commercial whaling was finally ceased.

Currently, some members of the JSU have been engaged in the Japan's Research Programme in the Antarctic (JARPA) and the Japan's Research Programme in the North Pacific (JARNP) that are in practice in accordance with Article VIII of the ICRW since 1987 and 1994 respectively. The data collected in the above research programmes, which involve sighting survey and also a small take of whales, are highly appreciated and strongly supported by the IWC Scientific Committee. The scientific data clearly justifies that the argument of the anti-whaling countries is baseless and unreasonable, and therefore would internationally not be acceptable anymore.

Although the second-stage of Japan's Research Programme in the Antarctic (JARPA II) resumed from November 2005, such commencing with the willful collision against the whale research mother ship gNisshin-maru\_h, a great number of acts of sabotage by collaboration of notorious radical environmental groups, "Greenpeace" and "Sea Shepherd Conservation Society", were hazardous terrorism deliberated against research ships, and shall violate the provisions of "Law for Preventing Collisions at Sea" and threaten safety of life and safe operation of ships, which cannot be accepted in the world. Therefore, in this Annual meeting, JSU strongly urge the distinguished delegates to condemn these acts of sabotage which are against humanity.

The collected scientific data through the above research also clarified that overprotection of the whales which is on the top of the marine food chain at sea causes a huge decrease of other marine resources. We all should realise that the management of whale stock in a proper manner based on scientific data and promotion of sustainable utilization are the best possible way to preserve the marine ecosystem.

We also urge the distinguished delegates to go through once again the provisions of ICRW and to reaffirm that the preamble of the ICRW states that the Convention is "to provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry". What the IWC is now called for the most is that the IWC regains its adequate function and all member states should discuss each other in good faith on how we can sustainably utilise the marine resources of our collective possession now and in the future.

Lastly, we strongly urge all the member states delegates to make every effort with a view to establishing the Revised Management Scheme (RMS) pursuant to the ICRW's objectives during this annual conference and to finalise the moratorium.

END TEXT

SCHIEFFER